

Remarks

The Office Action mailed March 9, 2005 has been carefully reviewed and the foregoing amendment has been made in consequence thereof.

Claims 1-11 and 13-21 are now pending in this application, of which claims 1, 2, 11, 13, 14, and 20 have been amended. Claim 12 has been canceled. Claim 21 is newly added. It is respectfully submitted that the pending claims define allowable subject matter.

The rejection of claims 11, 15-17, 19-20 under 35 U.S.C. § 101 as claiming the same invention as claims 11, 15-17 and 19-20 of U.S. Patent No. 6,857,893 is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 11 has been amended to recite limitations not found in the claims of U.S. Patent No. 6,857,893. Accordingly, claim 11 is believed to be distinguishable from all of the claims in U.S. Patent No. 6,857,893. Claims 15-17 and 19-20 depend from claim 11. When the recitations of claims 15-17 and 19-20 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 11, Applicant submits that dependent claims 15-17 and 19-20 likewise are distinguishable from the claims in U.S. Patent No. 6,857,893. Accordingly, for reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests that the double patenting rejection under 35 U.S.C. § 101 be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 1, 3-4 and 10 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hartz et al. (U.S. Patent No. 3,475,718) is respectfully traversed.

Hartz et al. describe a connector that includes a pair of housing blocks (10) and (11), each holding electrical terminals (15). Housing block (10) is inserted into housing block (11) to mate the terminals. The connector has a latching assembly including a raised shoulder (18) on side faces (20) and (21) of housing block (11) and resilient latching fingers (22) which are attached generally at their midpoints by a leg (24) to the side faces

(26) and (27) of housing block (10). A barb (28) is formed at the end of each latching finger. The other end (32) of each latching finger extends in an opposite direction from the leg and operates upon the application of pressure thereto to spread the barbs. A generally curved protecting element (34) including a curvilinear surface (36) is molded to each of the side faces of the housing at (40).

Claim 1 recites an electrical connector including “a housing having a mating face that is configured to be mounted onto an electrical connector interface; and a latch assembly provided on a side wall of said housing, said latch assembly including cantilevered upper and lower beams extending along said side wall and mounting brackets separated from one another along a length of said latch assembly, said mounting brackets joining said latch assembly to said side wall, said latch assembly having a portion between said mounting brackets that is deflectable toward said side wall”.

It is respectfully submitted that Hartz et al. neither describe nor suggest the apparatus recited in claim 1. Specifically, Hartz et al. neither describe nor suggest a latch assembly including cantilevered upper and lower beams. Rather, Hartz et al. describe a latch assembly having a single elongated latching finger. Accordingly, claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Hartz et al.

Claims 3-4 and 10 depend from independent claim 1. When the recitations of claims 3-4 and 10 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 1, Applicant submits that dependent claims 3-4 and 10 likewise are patentable over Hartz et al.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Section 102 rejection of claims 1, 3-4 and 10 be withdrawn.

The rejection of claims 5 and 9 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hartz et al. in view of Chen (U.S. Patent 2002/0119693) is respectfully traversed.

Hartz et al. is described above. Chen describes a connector assembly including a male connector (1) and a female connector (2). A lock arm (10) and a guard (15) are integrally with an upper region of a main body (5) of the male housing. The lock arm includes a pawl (11) formed at a fore end portion. A push lever (12) is formed at the rear end of the lock arm. An intermediate portion of the lock arm is supported by a pair of transversely extending hinge-shaped feet (13). A pair of supplementary resilient arms (14) extend forwardly from opposite lateral and lower edges of the rear end of the push lever. The hinge-shaped feet serve as fulcrums that permit the lock arm to move with a rocking motion.

Claims 5 and 9 depend from independent claim 1, which recites an electrical connector including “a housing having a mating face that is configured to be mounted onto an electrical connector interface; and a latch assembly provided on a side wall of said housing, said latch assembly including cantilevered upper and lower beams extending along said side wall and mounting brackets separated from one another along a length of said latch assembly, said mounting brackets joining said latch assembly to said side wall, said latch assembly having a portion between said mounting brackets that is deflectable toward said side wall”.

It is respectfully submitted that neither Hartz et al. nor Chen, considered alone or in combination, neither describe nor suggest the apparatus recited in claim 1. Specifically, neither Hartz et al. nor Chen, considered alone or in combination, neither describe nor suggest a latch assembly including cantilevered upper and lower beams. Rather, Hartz et al. describe a latch assembly having a single elongated latching finger, and Chen describes a latching mechanism also having a single lock arm. Accordingly, claim 1 is submitted to be patentable over Hartz et al. in view of Chen.

Claims 5 and 9 depend from independent claim 1. When the recitations of claims 5 and 9 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 1, Applicant submits that dependent claims 5 and 9 likewise are patentable over Hartz et al. in view of Chen.

For at least the reasons set forth above, Applicant respectfully requests that the Section 103 rejection of claims 5 and 9 be withdrawn.

The objection to claims 2, 6-8, 12-14, and 18 is respectfully traversed. Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication of allowable subject matter in dependent claims 2, 6-8, 12-14, and 18.

Applicant submits, however, that claims 2 and 6-8 depend from Claim 1 which is submitted to be patentable over the cited art for the reasons set forth above, and that claims 2 and 6-8 are likewise patentable.

Claim 12 has been canceled. Claims 13, 14, and 18 depend from claim 11 which recites an electrical connector, including “a housing having a mating face that is configured to join an electrical connector interface; a shroud provided on a side wall of said housing, said shroud having an outer flange spaced from said side wall to define a gap therebetween; and a latch assembly pivotally provided on said side wall, said latch assembly being oriented to extend along said side wall, said latch assembly including an upper beam and a lower beam extending along said side wall, and a cross bar joining said upper and lower beams proximate said mating face, at least a forward portion of said latch assembly being located within said gap and being pivotal between said shroud and said side wall”.

Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited art describes or suggests an electrical connector as recited in claim 11. Specifically, none of the cited art describes or suggests a latch assembly including upper and lower beams joined by a cross bar

proximate the mating face of the connector. Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 11 is patentable over the cited art.

Claims 13, 14, and 18 depend from independent claim 11. When the recitations of claims 13, 14, and 18 are considered in combination with the recitations of claim 11, Applicant submits that dependent claims 13, 14, and 18 likewise are patentable over the cited art.

Accordingly, Applicant respectfully requests that the objection to Claims 2, 6-8, 12-14, and 18 be withdrawn.

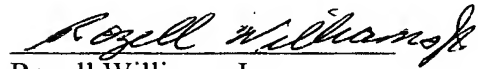
With respect to newly added claim 21, Applicant respectfully submits that none of the cited art describes or suggests an electrical connector that includes a housing having a mating face that is configured to join an electrical connector interface, a shroud provided on a side wall of the housing, the shroud having an outer flange spaced from the side wall to define a gap therebetween, and a latch assembly pivotally provided on the side wall, a length of the latch assembly extending along a length of the side wall, the latch assembly including an upper beam and a lower beam and mounting brackets separated from one another along a length of the latch assembly, the mounting brackets joining the latch assembly to the side wall, the latch assembly having a portion between the mounting brackets that is deflectable toward the side wall, the forward portion of the latch assembly rotating laterally within the gap about one of the mounting brackets when the portion of the latch assembly between the mounting brackets is deflected toward the side wall. Specifically, none of the cited art describes or suggests a latch assembly including upper and lower beams and mounting brackets joining the latch assembly to a side wall of the housing. Accordingly, Applicant submits that claim 21 is patentable over the cited art.

Express Mail No.: EV 977934437 US

Docket 18002 (AT 20958-35)
PATENT

In view of the foregoing remarks, all the claims now active in this application are believed to be in condition for allowance. Reconsideration and favorable action is respectfully solicited.

Respectfully Submitted,



Rozell Williams, Jr.

Registration No. 44,403

ARMSTRONG TEASDALE LLP

One Metropolitan Square, Suite 2600

St. Louis, Missouri 63102-2740

(314) 621-507014